A FUNERAL

SERMON

Preach'd at

St. *Edmund's-Bury*,

UPON

The much Lamented DEATH

OF

Mr. *JOHN BEART*,

Late Miniſter of the GOSPEL there;

WHO

Departed this LIFE *Jan.* the 3d. $17\frac{16}{17}$.

By *THOMAS WICKES.*

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN CLARK, *at the* Bible *and* Crown *in the* Poultry, *near* Cheapſide. 1717.

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On the DEATH of

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JOB IX. 12.

Behold He taketh away, who can hinder Him? Who will say unto Him, What doſt thou?

THE afflictive Diſpenſations of GOD's Providence are oftentimes of ſuch a Nature, that it is very difficult to maintain a right Frame of Spirit under them. How apt is Man to contend

with GOD, about the Wiſdom and Equity of his Proceedings!

THIS ariſes very much from the want of a due Conſideration of GOD's infinite *Perfections* on the one ſide, and of our own *Imperfections* on the other ſide. The more *exalting* Thoughts we have of GOD, and the more *abaſing* Thoughts of ourſelves, the better are we prepar'd for a ſuitable Entertainment of the moſt grievous Events of his Providence.

SUCH a Method we find *Job* here taking, for the compoſure of his Mind, amidſt the various *Loſſes* he had ſuſtain'd, and the heavy *Troubles* wherewith he was incompaſs'd; he exalts GOD and depreſſes Man; he proclaims the *Juſtice*, the *Wiſdom*, and the *Power* of GOD; and obſerves, on the other hand, the *Injuſtice*, the *Ignorance*, and *Weakneſs* of Man.

(1.) THE *Juſtice* of GOD is of awful Conſideration with him. *I know it of a Truth: But how ſhould man be juſt with God?* As if he had ſaid, I know that *God doth not pervert Judgment, nor the Almighty pervert Juſtice:* That *God will not caſt away a perfect Man.* I know certainly, that GOD is Juſt and Righteous in all his Proceedings. He can do his Creatures no Wrong. Tho' his Dealings may ſeem never ſo ſevere, yet they do not in the leaſt decline from the Rule of Juſtice. *But how ſhould Man*

Ver. 2.

Job viii. 3.

Ver. 20.

Man be juſt with God? If there be any Controverſie between them, the Right muſt needs lie on GOD's Part, and the Fault on Man's Part. There is no poſſibility of Injuſtice with GOD: But 'tis otherwiſe with Man; he is liable to be charged with Iniquity, and will not be able to vindicate himſelf before the Bar of GOD. *If he ſhall contend with him, he cannot anſwer him one of a thouſand.* ver. 3.

(2.) He conſiders the *Wiſdom* of GOD; *He is wiſe in Heart*, and one Argument of ver. 4. his Wiſdom is the Unſearchableneſs of his Works: *He doth great things paſt finding out.* ver. 10. And on the other hand, the *Blindneſs* and *Ignorance* of Man diſcovers itſelf in his being uncapable to trace the Ways of GOD, or to perceive Him in his Works. ver. 11.

(3.) He likewiſe conſiders the *Power* of GOD. As he is Wiſe in Heart, ſo he is *mighty in Strength.* And on the other ſide, ver. 4. Man is but *weak*: inſomuch that he cannot expect to be ſucceſsful in *hardening himſelf againſt God.* Various Inſtances are given of this great *Power*, in what is done by it both upon the *Earth* and upon ver. 5, 6. the *Heavens.* The *Weakneſs* of Man on ver. 7, 8, 9. the contrary, is ſet forth in the beginning of this 12th Verſe, by his *Inability* to *hinder* the Efficacy of GOD's Power.

UPON all which, this holy Man concludes, that the *Sovereignty* belongs to

God;

God; and that He is not accountable to ſuch a frail Thing as *Man* in what he doth.

IN the Words of the Text we may take Notice of three Particulars, *viz.* (1.) The *Powerful* Act of GOD; *Behold, He taketh away.* (2.) The Inability of all Creatures to obſtruct it. *Who can hinder Him?* And, (3.) The abſolute Right which GOD hath to exert this Power. *Who will ſay unto Him, What doſt Thou?*

(1.) Here is the powerful Act of GOD. He *taketh away.* The like Phraſe is uſed, *Job* i. 21. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.* GOD had taken from *Job*, his Cattel, his Servants, his Children. And probably he hath ſome reſpect thereunto in this Text. The LORD takes away the Comforts and Conveniences of Life. He takes away Health and Strength, when He ſees fit: He takes away Friends and Acquaintance and near Relations. *Behold, I take away from thee the Deſire of thine Eyes with a Stroke.* Ezekiel, xxiv. 16. This GOD doth; His Hand is in it: His Providence hath the ordering of it. *Behold,* He *taketh away.*

(2.) WE have here the *Inability* of all Creatures to prevent it. *Who can hinder Him?* Who can? Never a One in the World is able. The united Power of the whole Creation is not ſufficient to

ſtand

ſtand againſt the Power of GOD herein. The Words are laid down in the Form of a Queſtion, whereby the Thing is the more abſolutely and vehemently denyed.

(3.) HERE is the Soveraign *Right* which GOD hath thus to put forth His Power. *Who will ſay unto Him, What doſt Thou?* No Man hath any Warrant to ſpeak againſt it, when GOD hath once done it. *Who will ſay?* None that does rightly conſider the Perfections of GOD's Nature, the Extenſiveneſs of His Dominion, and the Abſoluteneſs of His Soveraignty over His Creatures. If any be found diſputing it againſt GOD, he acts contrary to his Duty; and diſcovers a Mind either ſwell'd with *Pride*, or clouded with *Paſſion*.

FROM the Words thus open'd, We may take this Obſervation. That GOD *hath not only an Irreſiſtible Power, but a Soveraign Right to diſpoſe of whatever we enjoy in this World.*

WHEN He takes away ſuch Things or Perſons, as are moſt Uſeful and Delightful to us in the World, He does it by ſuch a *Power* as cannot be withſtood; and with ſuch *Authority* as is not to be controul'd.

BEHOLD! *He taketh away*, and when He *will* do it, *who can hinder Him?* Who can prevent the Efficacy of his Power? BEHOLD! *He taketh away*, and when He *hath* done it, *Who will say unto him, What doſt thou?* Who will call in Queſtion the Equity of his Proceedings?

IN diſcourſing upon this Obſervation, it will be proper,

I. To enquire, *How or in what Reſpects all our Enjoyments are at God's Diſpoſal.*

II. To conſider, *The Irreſiſtableneſs of God's Power, in the Diſpoſal of them.*

III. THE *Submiſſion which is due from us, to the Sovereignty of God, therein.* And,

IV. THE *Grounds or Reaſons of that Submiſſion.*

I. HOW, *or in what Reſpects are all our Enjoyments at* GOD'S *Diſpoſal?*

Anſ. They are ſo in every Reſpect that can be named, they are not at all in our own Power, but wholly in GOD'S Hands. More particularly, there are theſe Three Reſpects wherein the rightful Power of GOD doth extend to them, *viz.* (1.) In Reſpect of the Things themſelves. He takes away *What* or *Whom* he pleaſeth. (2). In

(2). In Reſpect of the Time. He takes away *when* He pleaſeth. (3.) In Reſpect of the Way and Manner. He takes away *how* He pleaſeth.

1. ALL our uſeful and comfortable Enjoyments are at GOD's Diſpoſal, in reſpect of the *Things* (or Perſons) themſelves. He takes away *what or whom* He pleaſeth.

IF it ſeem good to Him, He can withdraw the *Silver* and *Gold*, wherewith Perſons are inrich'd; or the *Houſes* wherein they dwell. He can take away *Peace*; and put a ſtop to *Plenty*; and deprive of *Liberty*. He can take away the *Health* and *Strength* and *Comelineſs* and outward *Ornaments* of the *Body*; or any of thoſe Things which relate to the good Condition of the Natural and Civil Life.

SO for *Perſons*: GOD's Hand has the diſpoſal of them. He has a Rightful Power to ſeparate between the moſt intimate *Friends*, who have been pleaſant to each other, as *Jonathan* and *David*. He takes away *Wives* from Husbands, or *Husbands* from Wives: *Children* from Parents, or *Parents* from Children, and the like.

HIS Power extends to the removal of the moſt *uſeful* and ſerviceable *Perſons*, who, like *Elijah*, are the *Strength* of the

2 Kings ii. 3. Places were they live. *The Sons of the Prophets which were at* Bethel *came to* Eliſha, *and ſaid unto him; Knoweſt thou that the Lord will take away thy Maſter from thine Head to Day?* Compare *ver.* 12. Eliſha *ſaw it; and he cryed, My Father! My Father! The Chariot of* Iſrael *and the Horſemen thereof!*

2. IN Reſpect of the *Time*. This likewiſe is intirely at GOD's diſpoſal. He takes away *when* He pleaſeth. Whether ſooner, or later: In *Childhood*, or *Youth*, or *Manhood*, or *Old-Age*. And ſhews His Soveraignty in tranſlating His Servants to Heaven, when there ſeems to be more than ordinary *need* of them upon Earth. At ſuch Times and Seaſons when they can be ill ſpared. When the Number of the *Righteous* is *ſmall*, and the Number of the *Wicked* is exceeding *great*. Thus the Church laments, *Wo is me!* Mic. vii. 1, 2. *For I am as when they have gathered the Summer Fruits, as the Grape gleanings of the Vintage: There is no cluſter to Eat. My Soul deſired the firſt ripe Fruit. The good Man is periſhed out of the Earth,* &c. The *fewneſs* of good Men is there ſet forth, by comparing them to the *Gleanings* after the Vintage: When there is but here and there a Berry on the Top of a Bough: Not a whole *Cluſter* to be found.

There

There were Clusters of vile Persons, whole Trees laden with them: They abounded in every City and Town, and Street. There were Multitudes that could *do Evil with both Hands*; but very few that were *willing* and *fit* for the Service of GOD, and for promoting the Interest of Religion in the World. Even at such a Time doth GOD use his *Prerogative* in taking away. *The good Man is perished out of the Earth.*

3. IN Respect of the Way and *Manner*. He takes away *how* He pleaseth. Whether in an *Ordinary* Method, or in an *extraordinary*. Whether by *long* languishing Sickness, or by a *sudden* Stroke. He makes use of what *Instruments*, He sees fit, in this Act of His Soveraign Power. He chuseth out what Afflictions, what Distempers, He pleaseth, to be the Means hereof.

IN these, and such like *Respects*, are all our earthly Enjoyments in the Hands of GOD. He hath both a *Power* and *a Right* to dispose of *What* He pleaseth, *When* He pleaseth, and *How* He pleaseth.

II. WE are next to consider, The *Prevalency* of GOD's Power in this Matter, *Who can hinder Him?*

1. THE moſt *Strong* and *Mighty* cannot do it. If GOD reſolve to take away, and employ his Power to that Purpoſe, what is all the Power and Strength of the Creature before Him? He is ſo *mighty in Strength* that none can deliver out of his Hand. There is no forcible Reſcuing of thoſe whom GOD hath determined to take away. *I will take away and none ſhall reſcue. By Strength ſhall no Man prevail.*

Hoſ. v. 14.
1 Sam. ii. 9.

2. WHO *can hinder Him*? The moſt *wiſe* and *prudent* cannot do it, tho' never ſo many ſhould *aſſociate* themſelves, they would be broken in Pieces; tho' they ſhould take *counſel* together, it would come to nought, while their Counſel is croſs to the Deſign and Intention of God. None can hinder Him by *Wiſdom* and Prudence; He is ſo *wiſe in Heart*, that his Deſigns cannot be defeated. The Exerciſe of his Power is manag'd with ſuch wonderful *Counſel*, that it cannot fall ſhort of the End intended thereby. *There is no Wiſdom nor Underſtanding nor Counſel againſt the Lord.*

Iſa. viii. 9, 10.
Prov. xxi. 30.

3. WHO *can hinder Him*? The moſt *rich* and *wealthy*, cannot do it. So the *Pſalmiſt* obſerves concerning thoſe who have a Multitude of *Riches*. *None of them*

Pſ. xlix. 7.

can

can by any means redeem his Brother, or give to God a Ranſom for him: That he ſhould ſtill live for ever, and not ſee Corruption. Beware, ſays *Elihu* to *Job*, *leſt He take thee away with his Stroke: Then a great* Ranſom *cannot deliver thee. Will He eſteem thy* Riches? *No*; not Gold. If a Man could give his Houſe-full of *Gold* and *Silver*, it would not be accepted in this Caſe: It would not profit at ſuch a Time, when GOD puts forth his Hand to take away. Chapter. xxxvi. 18.

4. WHO *can hinder him?* The neareſt *Relations* and moſt intimate *Friends* cannot do it. The ſtraiteſt Bonds of natural or civil *Relation* will be ineffectual. All the Tyes of *Friendſhip* cannot keep together in this World, thoſe whom GOD undertakes to ſeparate from each other. The ſtrongeſt Cords of *Love* will not prevail herein; *Lover and Friend haſt thou put far from me*; *and mine Acquaintance into Darkneſs.* Pſalm lxxxviii. 18.

5. WHO *can hinder him?* The *beſt* of Men cannot do it. 'Tis above the Power and Skill, not only of *great* Men, but of *good* Men. There are Times and Seaſons when GOD will not ſpare, even at the intreaty of the moſt eminent *Saints*. Though ſuch as *Moſes* and *Samuel* Jer. xv. 1.

ſhould

ſhould ſtand before Him, He will not forbear to take away. The Prayers and *Supplications* and Cries of his own People, tho' theſe have been the moſt uſeful and ſucceſsful Means, and have oftentimes prevailed for the averting of threatned *Judgments*; yet when GOD ſets Himſelf to take away, he will not be hindered by *Intreaties*. David *beſought the Lord* for his Child; yet *the Child died.*

2 Sam. xii. 16. *Ver.* 18.

THUS we ſee, That when GOD will take away, his Power herein is irreſiſtible; *None can hinder Him.* Not the moſt ſtrong and mighty; not the moſt wiſe and prudent; not the moſt rich and wealthy; not the neareſt Relations and moſt intimate Friends; not the holieſt and beſt of Men.

III. WE ſhall now conſider the *Submiſſion* which is due from us to the *Soveraignty* of GOD, in his thus taking away. He diſpoſes of all our Comforts and Enjoyments, not only by an irreſiſtible Power, ſo as none can hinder Him; but likewiſe with a Soveraign *Right*, with a Supreme Authority, which none may diſpute againſt; *Who will ſay unto Him, What doſt Thou?* Now what is that *Submiſſion*, which GOD requires of us, with Reference hereunto?

THIS

THIS may be considered, first, *negatively*; and then *positively*.

First, NEGATIVELY. It does not consist in a stupid *Disregard* of what God doth; so as not to be *concerned* for it, or not to be *affected* with it. That's a great Evil; a Thing highly provoking to GOD. *They regard not the Work of the Lord, neither consider the Operations of his Hands. Therefore my People are gone into Captivity because they have no Knowledge.* Isa. v. 12, 13. They have no Knowledge, no *Consideration* of the Work of the LORD. They did not take due Notice of his threatning Providences: And thereupon *greater Miseries* took hold upon them: *Therefore my People are gone into Captivity.* Thus, in *Psal.* xxviii. 5. *Because they regard not the Works of the Lord, nor the Operation of his Hand; He will destroy them and not build them up.* So that, when we are not allowed to say unto GOD, *What dost Thou?* This does not exclude either.

(1.) A BEWAILING and laying to Heart the *Loss* which we sustain: For the Want of that is noted in Scripture as a great Miscarriage. *The Righteous perisheth and no Man layeth it to Heart.* Isa. lvii. 1. In such Cases GOD calls for Mourning and Lamentation. Nor,

(2.) DOES

(2.) DOES it exclude an humble *Enquiry* after the End and *Design* of GOD in ſuch afflictive Providences. We have the Practice of *Job* for this, in the next Chapter, he will not ſay unto GOD, *What doſt Thou?* Yet he will ſay, *Shew me wherefore Thou contendeſt with me.* Shew me what it is that I want to have *reformed* in me, for the Sake of which I am brought into theſe Troubles. Shew me what I ſhould *learn* by them: And for what *purpoſe* they are intended. To ſeek *Inſtruction* from GOD, in order to a Right *uſe* of his afflictive Diſpenſations, and to deſire *Information* concerning our *Duty* under them, this is allowable; this is commendable: This is *Meet* and becoming. *Surely it is Meet to be ſaid unto God. That which I ſee not, teach thou me.* But then in the,

Job. x. 2.

Job. xxxiv. 31, 32.

Second Place, To anſwer *Poſitively*, what this Submiſſion doth include.

(1.) IT includes *a forbearing* to *murmur* and repine under afflictive Providences. This was the bleſſed Temper of *Aaron*. When GOD took away Two of his Sons at once, tho' it was by a ſudden Stroke, in a very grievous Manner; *Aaron held his Peace.* The like Frame we find in the *Pſalmiſt*, under the Rebukes of GOD

Lev. x. 3.

in

in his Providence: *I was dumb; I opened not my Mouth; becauſe Thou didſt it.* He was dumb in Reſpect of Murmuring againſt GOD; dumb as to Quarrelling with GOD's Diſpenſations; he would not ſay unto Him, *What doſt Thou?* Pſ. xxxix. 9.

2. IT includes a *Willingneſs* to be at GOD's *Diſpoſal*; a Reſignation to his Pleaſure; a preferring GOD's Will above our own Wills. *Not my Will, but Thine be done.* This would keep us from ſaying to him, *What doſt Thou?* And would lead us on the contrary to ſay, with *Eli*, (in a very ſad and doleful Caſe,) *It is the Lord, let Him do what ſeemeth Him good.* It is the LORD, who hath an undoubted *Right* to diſpoſe of all that belongs to me. If He ſees good to do this, 'tis fit that *his Will* ſhould take place, and that *my Will* ſhould give place. 'Tis not what may ſeem good to me, that is ſo much to be regarded, as what ſeems good to Him. 1 Sam. iii. 18.

3. IT includes an Acknowledgment of the Righteouſneſs, Wiſdom, and Faithfulneſs of GOD in all his Dealings with us.

(1.) AN Acknowledgment of his *Righteouſneſs.* This was the Practice of *Daniel*:

1 Dan. ix. 4. *The Lord our God is righteous in all his Works which He doth.* Notwithſtanding all the Evil which had come upon the People of *Iſrael*, he owns the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of GOD, not only in ſome, but in *All* the Works which He doth. So Neh. ix. 33. *Nehemiah*; *Howbeit, Thou art juſt in all that is brought upon us: For Thou haſt done right, but we have done wickedly.* To complain of the Ways of the LORD as unequal Ways, this is in effect to ſay, *What doſt Thou?* And ſuch was the wicked Complaint of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, *Ezek.* xviii. 25. *Ye ſay, the Way of the Lord is not equal.* A due Subjection to the Sovereignty of GOD in what He doth, carries in it an Acknowledgment of the Righteouſneſs of GOD in all his Proceedings, *The Lord is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works.* Pſ. cxliv. 17.

(2.) AN Acknowledgment of his *Wiſdom*, Even while we do not underſtand the Reaſon of his Proceedings, *Who will ſay unto Him, What doſt Thou?* We are full to perſuade ourſelves of his unerring *Wiſdom*, and that the Methods which He takes, are ſuitable to promote thoſe wiſe and holy Ends, which He aims at therein. His Ways are above our Ways; and his Thoughts above our Thoughts: It becomes us to acknowledge the Wiſ-

dom

dom of GOD in All: For He is *only wise*, Isa. xl. 28.
And *there is no searching of his Understanding.*

(3.) AN Acknowledgment of his *Faithfulness*: All the *Paths of the Lord are* Psal. xxv.
Mercy and Truth, unto such as keep his Cove- 10.
nant, and his Testimonies. All the Paths wherein He walks towards his People; they are Mercy, they are Truth: Nothing to is be found in them, but what does well consist with his Mercy and Goodness: Nothing but what does well consist with his Truth and Faithfulness. Tho' it may sometimes be hard for us to reconcile GOD's *Providences* with his *Promises*; yet GOD knows how to reconcile them, and to justify his *Faithfulness* in all his Dispensations. And therein we are to acquiesce; not saying unto Him, *What dost Thou?*

THESE are some Particulars included in that Submission which is due to GOD in the Dispensations of his Providence; *viz.* A forbearing to murmur and repine under our afflictive Losses; a Willingness to be at GOD's Diposal; an Acknowledgment of his Righteousness, Wisdom and Faithfulness in all his Dealings with us.

IV. WE are to conſider the *Grounds* and Reaſons hereof. Upon what Grounds is our Submiſſion due to GOD in what He doth?

1. BECAUSE He is our *Maker*, Rom. ix. 20. *Nay, but O Man! who art thou, that replyeſt againſt God? Shall the Thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus?* He that hath *formed* us, may well claim, and reſerve to Himſelf this Liberty, to place us in what Condition He pleaſeth; to order what Circumſtances we ſhall be in; what we ſhall enjoy in the World; how long we ſhall enjoy it; and when it ſhall be taken away. If therefore He take away, *Who will ſay unto Him, What doſt thou?*

2. BECAUSE He is our *Preſerver*; By his Hand we are upheld in Being; Acts xvii. 28. *In Him we live and move*; upon Him we have our Dependence for all Things which relate to our Comfort and Well-being. If therefore He doth take away, He takes but his *Own*, that which comes comes of his *own Hand*, 1 Chron. xxix. 16. And certainly He has a *Right* to do what He will with his own; and we have *no Right* to contend with Him about it.

3. BECAUSE

3. BECAUSE He is the ſupreme *End* of all Things: We have theſe Three put together, in *Rom.* xi. 36. *Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all Things.* Of Him, as the firſt Author of their Being; through Him, as the Preſerver of their Being; and to Him, as the End of their Being. The LORD hath made all Things *for Himſelf*; for his own Uſe; for his own Glory; for his own Pleaſure. Prov. xxvi. 4. And therefore, if He take away, *Who will ſay unto Him, What doſt Thou?* It belongs to Him, *for whom* are all Things, to have all Things at his own Diſpoſal.

4. THE Excellencies and *Perfections* of GOD's Nature, call for this Submiſſion. on. We are not fit to govern ourſelves; not fit to have the Diſpoſal of our own Circumſtances in our own Power. GOD is infinitely fit to be the Governor of the World, and to have the Management of all Things therein. 'Tis fit that GOD ſhould do all his *Pleaſure*, becauſe there is none like to Him: *I am God, and there is none like me: Declaring the End from the Beginning, and from ancient Times the Things that are not yet done; ſaying, My Counſel ſhall ſtand: and I will do all my Pleaſure.* Iſa. xlvi. 9, 10. How ill would it be for us, to be left unto ourſelves! To have our own Wills,

and

and left to follow our own Counſels! We have not *Diſcretion* enough to *know what is good for us in this Life.* But ſuch are the *Perfections* and Excellencies of GOD's Nature, that He is moſt fit and worthy to have the Diſpoſal of us, and of all that appertains to us.

Eccleſ. iv. 12.

THESE are ſome of the Grounds upon which the Soveraign Dominion of GOD is founded; and upon which, by Conſequence, our Subjection to Him in the Diſpoſals of his Providence is moſt due. He is our Maker, He is our Preſerver, He is the ſupreme End of all Things. The infinite Perfections and Excellencies of his Nature, render Him moſt fit and worthy to govern the World.

AND thus we have endeavour'd to clear the Obſervation propounded, *viz.* That GOD hath not only an irreſiſtible Power, but a Soveraign Right, to diſpoſe of all that we enjoy in this World.

THAT which yet remains, is, To make ſome *Improvement* of this Doctrine, with Reference to the mournful *Occaſion* of this ſolemn *Aſſembly.*

THE LORD hath lately *taken away* from among us, a good Man, a profitable Preacher,

Preacher, a faithful Paſtor, a kind Huſband, a tender Parent, a deſirable Friend.

HE was One that *feared the Lord from his Youth.* GOD ſeaſon'd his Heart with Grace in his tender Years: Even from a *Child* he knew the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wiſe unto Salvation, through Faith which is in CHRIST JESUS. Many ſerious Chriſtians, who were the Obſervers of his early Inclination to *Piety* and *Learning*, could not forbear giving their Voices for his being educated to the Work of the *Miniſtry*. And the LORD provided him a ſolid and judicious *Tutor*, to be the Guide of his Studies. Notwithſtanding the Diſadvantages of a *private* Education, his Attainments were very conſiderable, through the Bleſſing of GOD accompanying his diligent Endeavours. While he gave himſelf to *Reading*, he did not neglect *Praying*; which in all our Studies and Employments, is like Oyl to the Wheels, making them go on the more ſmoothly.

HE entred upon the Miniſtry very young: But his Knowledge and *Experience* were beyond the Proportion of his Years:

Fears: His Gifts met with good Acceptance from the very firſt; and he was ſtill *growing in Grace*, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, he ſerved GOD with his *Spirit* in the Goſpel of his Son. This Work was not his Burthen, but his Delight.

THE Doctrines of the Freeneſs of GOD's *Grace*, and the Fulneſs of CHRIST's *Righteouſneſs*, with the Sinners *Juſtification* thereby in a Way of *Believing*: Theſe were his *darling Subjects*, to which his Meditations frequently return'd: Yet he did not neglect (as his own Expreſſion is, in one of his Writings) to "*Ballance* the Do-"ctrines of Grace with other neceſſary "Points; ſuch as the Evil and Danger of "Sin; the Uſefulneſs and Neceſſity of "Good-Works in their proper Place. *" He was ſenſible, that "The Grace of "GOD is not ſavingly known, where "Ungodlineſs is not deny'd: That San-"ctification is neceſſary to the Poſſeſſion "of the heavenly Inheritance: That "ſuch as have no Meetneſs for this In-"heritance, will be found at laſt to have "no

* Vindication, *Part* II. *in* Preface.

"no Title to it: That Holineſs is re-
"quir'd in a Way of Preparation for
"the immediate Enjoyment of the Holy,
"Holy, Holy LORD GOD †." Thus he ſtudy'd to ſhew himſelf *approved unto God*, a Workman that needed not to be aſham'd, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

SUCH was his *humble* and *gracious* Behaviour, that it gain'd him the general Eſteem and Affection of thoſe that had the Privilege to be acquainted with him.

HE was much converſant in *bearing the Burthens of others*; maintaining a Fellow-feeling with them in their Diſtreſſes and Afflictions, whether Perſonal or Family; while abſent in Body, he would be preſent with them in Spirit; and whereſoever he was, did compaſſionately bear them upon his Heart in his fervent Addreſſes at the Throne of Grace.

YOU that were his peculiar Charge, have fully known *his Doctrine, Manner of Life, Purpoſe, Faith, Long-ſuffering, Charity, Patience*; (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks,

† Vindication, *Part* I. *in* Concluſion.

in 2 *Tim.* iii. 10.) He was willing to *ſpend*, and be *ſpent* for your Souls. And I doubt not, but you will bear him Witneſs, That he did not ſeek *yours*, but *you*. He accounted his Strength, his Time, and Labours to be yours, in a ſpecial Manner, for your ſpiritual Benefit and Advantage *: Yet ſo, as to be ready, upon all Occaſions, to preach the *Unſearchable Riches of* CHRIST in other Places, where a Door was opened for him, not declining ſuch Opportunities as were afforded him, for being more extenſively Uſeful in his Generation.

HE was *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* His abundant Labours, I fear, might be a Means to impair his Health; yet the Perſuaſions of his Friends to ſpare himſelf, would make but little Impreſſion upon him. His *Zeal* for the Glory of GOD, and *Concern* for the Salvation of Souls, carried him out beyond his bodily Strength. And after a painful and induſtrious Attendance to the Service of his Great MASTER for above Twenty Years, he now *reſts from his Labours*, and is entred into the *Joy of his Lord*, it may be, before he was aware; at leaſt, while his Friends

* Divine Breathings, in Preface.

Friends and Acquaintance (conſidering he was no further advanc'd in Age, than to his Forty-third Year compleat) might be promiſing themſelves the Continuance of his Uſefulneſs for many Years to come.—— But, *Behold!* He is *taken away.*

NOW, What does ſuch a *Providence* as this call for at our Hands?

(1.) DOTH GOD take away? Then we ſhould make it our Care to *behold* this in a due Manner. Conſider, and lay it to Heart: Seriouſly Regarding the Operation of GOD's Hand therein; and endeavouring to get ſome Good thereby.

(2.) Is it GOD that takes away? Then inſtead of ſaying to Him, *What doſt Thou?* it becomes us rather to be ſaying to ourſelves, *What have we done?* Have not we, by the Miſimprovement of our Mercies and Privileges, provoked GOD to deprive us of them? It is not for us to reply againſt GOD; to murmur at his Proceedings; but to *juſtify* Him in all his Dealings with us, and to *accuſe* ourſelves.

(3.) Is GOD taking away *others?* This ſhould quicken us to a timely *Preparation* for our own Removal. It concerns us to be working *while it is Day*; before the Night comes, when no Man can work. None of us can tell how *ſoon*, or how *ſuddenly* GOD may take us away. *Be ye therefore ready alſo, for the Son of Man cometh at an Hour when ye think not.*

Luke xii. 40.

(4.) DOTH GOD take away our neareſt *Relations?* Then how highly ſhould we eſteem a Covenant-Intereſt in Himſelf? Although my Houſe be not ſo with GOD; although He make it not to grow (but is leſſening and weakening of it) yet, ſays *David*, *He hath made with me* (and every true Believer is allowed to ſay, He hath made with me) *an everlaſting Covenant, ordered in all Things, and ſure: For this is all my Salvation, and all my Deſire.* Whatever GOD takes away from his own Children, his Covenant-Mercy and Loving kindneſs will remain. *My Kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.*

2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Iſa. liv. 10.

(5.) DOTH GOD take away the choiceſt of our *Creature-Comforts?* Then this

this ſhould lead us to a more entire Dependance upon GOD, and a more firm Adherence to Him: *Ceaſe ye from Man*, whoſe Breath is in his Noſtrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? *Truſt ye in the Lord for ever*; for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlaſting Strength. Iſa. ii. 22. Iſa. xxvi. 4.

(6.) DOTH GOD take away our uſeful and intimate *Friends?* Let us ſee that we ſhew ourſelves *friendly* to their ſurviving Relations; make it appear that we have a real Reſpect for their Memory, by our Kindneſs to thoſe they have left behind. David *ſaid to* Mephiboſheth, (in 2 *Sam.* ix. 7.) *I will ſurely ſhew thee Kindneſs for* Jonathan *thy Father's Sake.* And this he calls the *Kindneſs of God*, ver. 3. Partly, as being the Kindneſs which GOD *requires*, approves of, and is well-pleas'd with: Partly, as being the Kindneſs whereof GOD is the Glorious *Pattern* and Example; which is a Kindneſs, not merely in Word, but in *Deed*; not a narrow or ſhort-lived, but a *large and* a *laſting* Kindneſs.

(7.) *Laſtly*, DOTH GOD take away our *Miniſters?* This calls for our *praying the Lord of the Harveſt*, That He will ſend forth Labourers into his Harveſt; and will give *Paſtors* after his own Heart,

Heart, who may Feed his People with Knowledge and Understanding. But I shall conclude with the Words of *Moses*, *Let the Lord, the God of the Spirits of all Flesh, set a Man over the Congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them; and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the Congregation of the Lord be not as Sheep which have no Shepherd.*

Numbers xxvii. 16, 17.

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